

By Mike Handley August 29, 2011 [Link](#)

Yesterday I was invited to the Mojave Air and Spaceport to listen to Congressman Kevin McCarthy give a Congressional update to the citizens of Mojave, the media, and elected officials. After that Congressman McCarthy went to a town meeting where he presented service medals to World War II veteran Robert Sutherland. The presentation and the career of Mr. Sutherland are impressive to say the least. When that was done I was invited to a private interview with the Congressman. I spent over a half hour, one on one with Kevin McCarthy, one of the most powerful men in the Government.

During all the presentations and my conversation with the man I never once saw him refer to notes nor did he have any cue cards or teleprompters. I watched him as he gave the Congressional update to a crowd of around one hundred people. It was obvious that he had command of the information and he was straightforward in his presentation. He did not attack the President or the opposition party and his comments as to the solutions to the problems we are facing showed common sense and logic. During the question and answer period that followed the presentation Congressman McCarthy engaged the audience and quickly answered their questions without hesitation. You might not like some of what he said, but you knew it was the truth.

At the awards presentation Congressman McCarthy genuinely enjoyed himself and admitted he liked this part of his job most. It showed.

Then it was my turn. I was escorted to the office of the facility manager where the Congressman stood, gave me a firm handshake and greeted me warmly. We were alone in the room except for his District Director, Vince Fong. Kevin told me to ask any questions I wanted. I told him that most of us who follow the news knew where he and the Republican Party stood on the issues so I wanted to get to know Kevin McCarthy.

I asked Kevin what his average day in Washington was like? How did he get back and forth to work? He surprised me by saying that he takes a commercial jet from Bakersfield, where he lives with his wife and kids, to Washington with a stop in the middle. When he gets there he goes directly to his office. The man actually lives in his office. He said when he was first elected, some years ago, he rented an apartment but he found he could get more work done by living

out of his office. His average day starts around 6am when he goes to the Congressional gym for a workout or goes bike riding with the Capitol Police. An hour later he is having breakfast and then the meetings begin. Between the Staff meetings, the Committee meetings, the floor votes, and the phone calls his day doesn't wind down until 6 or 7pm. He gets something to eat and goes to bed. He looks forward to Friday when he can fly home to his family. I said well that answers my question about what you do with your free time. He admitted it is hard to get much else done when you are a Congressman.

I asked him if I was to go to his web site and write him an email on some issue who would read it and does it have any effect. He said that each personalized email is read by one of his staff and at their daily meetings the content of the emails are discussed with him. Kevin admitted that those form emails that ask the voter to, "send this email to your Congressman", don't have as much effect as the hand written ones. He enjoys hearing from home because, "I need to know what you are thinking".

I asked him how he deals with the thousands of lobbyists in Washington? His answer was simple. He checks to see if the company the lobbyist works for is doing business in Congressman McCarthy's district. If not they don't get the meeting unless they are introduced by one of Congressman McCarthy's constituents who are doing business with that company.

I asked him if he writes his own speeches and he said yes.

I asked him about his family life and how it is affected by the job. He said that he appreciates his family more when he gets to be with them because of the absence. He does have the usual contact via phone and text etc... but that isn't the same as being there. His daughter doesn't mind her friends knowing that Dad is a Congressmen but his son, not so much. It is interesting how kids perceive their parents.

When I asked Kevin if he had aspirations for higher office he said that he thinks he has reached the high point in his career. I said if you are asked to think about the number two slot on the 2012 ticket would you be open to that? He smiled and said he doubts anyone would be calling but he would serve his Country where he is needed.

I questioned Congressman McCarthy about how the job of Majority Whip works. His answer

was that every individual Congressman has the interests of their district to deal with and those interests are different in each district. As Whip he makes an effort to visit each congressman's district to gain rapport with the Congressman and find out what interests are important to that Congressman. Then he works toward finding consensus to get a bill passed. Kevin feels the record indicates he is successful more often than not. He said that when he can't get a bill through Congress he figures that maybe the bill wasn't as good as it could have been or maybe the timing wasn't quite right. He said that working at his job is an ongoing process which is sometimes successful and sometimes not. You just have to move forward.

I asked Congressman McCarthy about the Central Valley Water issue and why the Government couldn't figure out how to keep a two inch fish out of a water pipe so we could get the farmers back to work feeding the Nation, not to mention the jobs that could be created and the tax revenues that would help fix the budget mess in Sacramento. He said that the fish, (the Delta Smelt), the EPA was trying to save isn't even indigenous to the Delta. When I asked him what could be done to get the EPA to help fix the problem he said that Congress controls the EPA's money....

I told Kevin that several people I had talked to were not happy that the Congress had agreed to a committee of twelve to solve the budget mess and that if they failed the automatic cuts would gut our Defense. He said that he too was concerned but that at least whatever they came up with had to be agreed upon by a vote in the House before it could get anywhere. He said the penalties imposed for non-action might just make them get the job done.

I asked Congressman McCarthy about the possibility of opening an office in Lancaster and he said he is looking into the possibility of sharing some office space with a State Assemblyman but the Congressional rules would have to be worked out first.

I have to say that I am impressed with the man. He is a dedicated Civil Servant who works harder than almost anyone I have ever met. The long hours, the frustration of dealing with the bureaucracy, the time away from the family, all add up to a job that grinds away at you, and yet he continues to push on. There is a lot to admire about this man. He has strong convictions and high standards for himself and those who work for him. As a taxpayer I am convinced that we are getting our moneys worth out of Kevin McCarthy. We could do with a lot more men and women like him working for us.